

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE TRANSPORTATION WORKSHOP
OF THE ESCAMBIA COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

AUGUST 8, 2019

Present: Commissioner Lumon J. May, Chairman, District 3
Commissioner Steven L. Barry, Vice Chairman, District 5
Commissioner Robert D. Bender, District 4
Commissioner Jeffrey W. Bergosh, District 1
Commissioner Douglas B. Underhill, District 2
Janice Gilley, County Administrator
Alison Rogers, County Attorney
DeLana Allen-Busbee, Administrative Specialist, Clerk and Comptroller's Office
Krykyt Fisher, Office Assistant III, Clerk and Comptroller's Office
David Forte, Traffic and Transportation Manager
Shamara Jernigan, Agenda Program Coordinator, County Administrator's Office
Joy Jones, County Engineer
Austin Mount, CEO, Emerald Coast Regional Council (ECRC)
Jared Perdue, District Director, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)

Location: Central Office Complex, 3363 West Park Place, Pensacola, FL

Report prepared by: DeLana Allen-Busbee

AGENDA ITEMS

1. Call to Order

Chairman May called the Committee of the Whole (C/W) Workshop to order at 8:58 a.m.

2. Was the Meeting Properly Advertised?

The C/W was advised by DeLana Allen-Busbee, Administrative Specialist, Clerk and Comptroller's Office, that the meeting was advertised in the *Pensacola News Journal* on August 3, 2019, in the Board's weekly meeting schedule.

FOR INFORMATION: Janice Gilley, County Administrator, and Joy Jones, County Engineer, welcomed guests from partner agencies, thanked them for participating in the Transportation Workshop, and explained the goals for the workshop.

AGENDA ITEMS – Continued

3. FDOT Pensacola Bay Bridge Update

- A. TPO/FDOT/County Transportation Overview; and
B. FL-AL TPO Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) – County Projects –

- (1) Austin Mount, CEO, ECRC, summarized the purpose and process of the TPO (Transportation Planning Organization), which flows as followed:
- The LRTP is updated every five years
 - A needs plan is formulated, followed by a cost feasible plan
 - Project priorities are updated annually
 - The FDOT Five-Year Plan is updated annually
 - The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is updated annually
- (2) Commissioner Bender and Commissioner Underhill discussed the Bob Sikes Toll Bridge and its placement on the LRTP;
- (3) Mr. Mount discussed issues with the ATMS (Automated Transportation Management System) on the LRTP and the caveat of needing ongoing local support; items that have had success, such as the Cervantes Safety Improvements project; and the need for ongoing conversations about projects to help them succeed;
- (4) Commissioner Underhill and Mr. Mount discussed the mechanism to inform citizens when projects are not successful;
- (5) Jared Perdue, District Director, FDOT, overviewed how projects go from the TPO to FDOT; explained that FDOT's purpose is to fund regional priorities, relying heavily on the TPOs; and outlined how priorities are funded with statutory requirements for maintenance and preservation coming out first, SIS (Strategic Intermodal System) items next, and finally, discretionary capacity projects;
- (6) Mr. Perdue informed the committee that District 3 (which includes Escambia County) receives around 8% of available funding;
- (7) Commissioner Bender and Mr. Perdue discussed safety aspects of the Pensacola Bay Bridge;
- (8) Mr. Perdue, in response to inquiry from Commissioner Bergosh, advised that Nine Mile Road, from Navy Federal Credit Union to Exit 5, is expected to have all four lanes of traffic open by the fall;

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AGENDA ITEMS – Continued

3. Continued...

A & B. Continued...

- (9) Mr. Perdue discussed the Beulah Interchange project and how the design is actually being funded concurrently with the PD&E (Project Development and Environment) study; he expects it to be deliverable in three to four years;
- (10) Upon further inquiry from Commissioner Bender and Commissioner Underhill, Mr. Perdue advised that anything that increases momentum or brings resources to a project can help move it forward more quickly;
- (11) David Forte, Traffic and Transportation Manager, gave a brief overview of project priorities for Escambia County;
- (12) Commissioner Underhill, after discussion, asked Mr. Mount to work with county staff to bring forward an agenda item for the Board regarding a recommendation for a letter of support for the ATMS, and the C/W agreed to also include in the letter information on providing available land to house ATMS operations; and
- (13) Commissioner Underhill suggested that the Board consider identifying certain core corridors in Escambia County as being priority infrastructure that is not district-specific; County Administrator Gilley and Mr. Forte presented a draft of a map identifying some of these corridors, and the C/W agreed to bring back the issue for discussion at another C/W Workshop; and

C. Perdido Key Drive/Beulah Road – Road Swap –

- (1) Mr. Forte advised the C/W that the Agreement, Memorandum of Understanding, and Resolution have been provided and action is needed from the Board to approve and execute them;
- (2) The C/W discussed the road swap and its effect on the Beulah Interchange project, the responsibilities of upgrading the roadways and moving utilities should the swap occur, and the potential impacts, both negative and positive, of the swap;
- (3) Mr. Perdue advised that the project is eligible for SIS funds due to its regional nature and that not completing the swap will not jeopardize the project, but that completing the swap would help the project, as it makes sense for it to be a state facility;

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AGENDA ITEMS – Continued

3. Continued...

C. Continued...

- (4) Commissioner Barry advised that he is supportive of the documents and agreements as they exist today and that he is confident that FDOT will be a receptive partner;
- (5) Mr. Perdue advised that future developments along the corridor would fall to the state if the swap occurs, and upon inquiry from Commissioner Underhill, advised that the funding from FDOT will remain in place for the Perdido Key bike path; and
- (6) The C/W discussed evacuation routes and was advised by Mr. Perdue that there is not a specific funding source for evacuation routes and Perdido Key Drive would remain eligible for federal aid.

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| Motion: Move the Agreement |
| For Information: The C/W agreed to bring the item back for Board action on September 5, 2019, at the Regular BCC Meeting |
| Made by: Commissioner Bergosh |
| Seconded by: Commissioner Barry |
| Disposition: Carried unanimously |

4. Legislative Items

- A. Federal – BUILD Grant Applications; and
- B. State – Appropriation Requests –

- (1) David Forte, Traffic and Transportation Manager, gave a brief overview of BUILD Grant Applications and State Appropriation Requests for Escambia County;
- (2) Richard Gentry, State Lobbyist for Escambia County, discussed the County's submissions for the last session and recommended that for the upcoming session, Escambia County submit two to three priorities, make the distinction between transportation projects and water projects, tie the projects to aspects like economic development, and get the asks in as soon as possible;
- (3) Commissioner Bender gave an update from the most recent MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) meeting that he attended, and discussed the type of projects they recommended;

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AGENDA ITEMS – Continued

4. Continued...

A & B. Continued...

- (4) Austin Mount, CEO, ECRC, discussed risks and repercussions related to requests for legislative appropriations for transportation dollars, such as the budget being vetoed if the project is vetoed;
- (5) Commissioner Underhill advised that the guidance he has received in Tallahassee has been to submit one road project, one water project, and one criminal justice project; he is comfortable removing the estuary program until it is a sophisticated ask; and recommended the Brownsville and Warrington septic to sewer conversion in the commercial corridor be considered as a water project;
- (6) Commissioner May advised that he would like Mr. Gentry to only approve to take items that can potentially be successful;
- (7) Mr. Mount, in response to Commissioner Bender's inquiry, recommended that each project be looked at circumstantially and that aspects such as the project having funding be considered;
- (8) Mr. Forte advised that staff would bring back options for the Board to consider; and
- (9) Commissioner Underhill advised that solving critical infrastructure was more important to him than signs and facades in the CRA (Community Redevelopment District).

5. Lighting

A. City of Pensacola School Zone Beacons –

- (1) David Forte, Traffic and Transportation Manager, advised the C/W that the desire is for all school zone beacons to be uniform, County staff was recently approached by the City of Pensacola and requested to assume the maintenance of the 18 school zone beacons in the City, the County receives funding from the state to offset the cost of beacons on state roads, and the City would transfer their portion of the state funding to the County if the County does assume the responsibility; and
- (2) The C/W agreed to have staff coordinate with the City to bring forth a potential equitable agreement, and was advised by Mr. Forte that the City has committed to updating the beacons so that it would be a smooth transition; and

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AGENDA ITEMS – Continued

5. Continued...

B. Streetlighting Updates – Mr. Forte advised the C/W that staff has worked out an agreement with FDOT so that within the next two months, if not earlier, the intersections at Millview, Eight Mile Creek, and Klondike in District 1 will be lit; and in District 2 staff is working with their counterparts at FDOT to light up the commercial corridor in Perdido.

6. Bridges

A. Bridge Program Update –

(1) Scott Sanders, Division Manager and Assistant County Engineer, provided the following information regarding Escambia County bridges:

- Approximately \$7 million per year is needed to implement the bridge replacement program recommended by the Mott MacDonald study
- Between 2021 and 2028, there is an expected \$5 million shortfall per year
- Year 2020 has \$0 allocated for bridge inspections/rehabilitations
- Staff is asking that \$150 thousand be advanced from the programmed 2021 budget for 2020 inspections, rehabilitation, and design services
- Since 2009, 40 bridges have been replaced and four others are under construction
- Two bridges were replaced by in-house forces in 2018
- Eleven bridges are programmed for replacement through 2028 and several others are underway or programmed

(2) Commissioner Barry advised that the number of bridges replaced in the last ten years is significantly more than in the previous ten years, many other communities are going through similar issues with bridges, Quintette bridge is a big concern, and he will work with County Administrator Gilley to move forward the \$150,000 requested; and

B. Bob Sikes Bridge and Toll –

(1) Jared Perdue, District Director, FDOT, advised the Committee that there are a handful of locally owned toll bridges in Florida;

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AGENDA ITEMS – Continued

6. Continued...

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- (2) Commissioner Bender discussed replacement costs for the Bob Sikes Toll Bridge, which will be needed in the next 15-20 years and range from around \$140 million to \$167 million; advised that currently \$1.3 million annually is allocated to go towards the bonds on the widening of Via De Luna through 2021; funding needs to start accruing in a sinking fund for the replacement of the bridge; and currently, the tolls are the only non-ad-valorem funding source for bridge replacement;
- (3) Commissioner Bender, in response to Commissioner Underhill, also advised that he believes three lanes are needed on either side so that traffic can continue to free flow and for future traffic capacity, and that there is a cap on buildout and dwellings on the island; and
- (4) Commissioner Underhill advised that with the rate of decay and rate of replacement of bridges, he believes the County needs to double the amount of funding put towards bridges until we are caught up and he will be supportive of plans to do so; and
- (5) Commissioner Barry advised that he will work with County Administrator Gilley to discuss ways to supplement additional funding for bridges in ways that are not a detriment to colleagues in other districts.

[Commissioner May was absent during the discussion of this Item.]

7. General Transportation Topics

This agenda item was not discussed.

8. Adjourn

Vice Chairman Barry declared the C/W Transportation Workshop adjourned at 11:43 a.m.